

SOCIAL WELFARE, PHD

THE PHD PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WELFARE

The PhD program in Social Welfare strives to develop scholars, leaders, and social work educators who will advance knowledge about social work, social welfare policy, and intervention strategies from a behavioral and social science perspective to improve the quality of life of individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.

Our students work with award-winning research centers and institutes (<https://research.wisc.edu/centers-cores/>), such as the Institute for Research on Poverty, Institute on Aging, Waisman Center, School of Medicine and Public Health, and more. Our students choose from a wide selection of courses in world-renowned social and behavioral science departments including; Sociology, Economics, Educational Psychology, Human Development and Family Studies, the La Follette School of Public Affairs, Psychology, Gender Studies, Population Health, Nursing, and more.

The PhD program provides an interdisciplinary plan of study in basic and applied social research. In the program, doctoral students build and integrate knowledge in:

- a substantive or social problem area (e.g., child welfare, aging, developmental disabilities, end-of-life care, health, mental health, poverty);
- social science theory (e.g., theories of the life course, economic theory, psychopathology, organizational theory, stress process theories);
- research designs and statistical methodologies (e.g., program evaluation, policy analysis, longitudinal analysis).

The PhD Program in Social Welfare is an in-person, full-time program. Regardless of the program track, it typically takes four to six years to complete the program: two to three years for full-time doctoral coursework and two to three years for completion of the preliminary exam and dissertation. The actual time students take to obtain the PhD degree will vary according to their previous preparation, progress in the program, and the nature of their dissertation work.

The UW-Madison Sandra Rosenbaum School of Social Work is known for its:

- National Reputation of Excellence
- Faculty Research
- Highly Recruited Graduates
- Strong Faculty Mentoring Model
- Individualized Programs of Study
- Substantial Financial Support

- Rigorous Interdisciplinary Research Training
- Vibrant Graduate Student Community
- Opportunities to collaborate with world-renowned research centers and institutes
- Options to pursue interdisciplinary PhD minors in Aging; Prevention and Intervention Science; and Women's Studies, among others

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The School of Social Work at UW-Madison is consistently ranked among the best schools of social work in the country. Faculty prepare social work professionals at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. Through the preparation of social work practitioners, scholars, and educators, faculty and students explore and seek to understand the nature of social problems, their impact on vulnerable populations, and ways to critically analyze and promote the achievement of a just, equitable, healthy, and productive society.

Social work faculty are noted for their scholarly work in developing a conceptual understanding of social work practice and policy, and in producing research in important social problem areas. For example, faculty took a leadership role in the development of the generalist model of practice now used by most social work programs. Faculty members have made valuable research contributions in the fields of aging, child welfare, developmental disabilities, and family and intergenerational caregiving, as well as in educational attainment and life-course decision-making, end-of-life care for older adults and palliative care, health disparities, homelessness, poverty, social policy, welfare reform, and child support. Drawing on strong faculty, excellent students, and the resources of a world-renowned university in a community rich with social and human service programs, there is much to offer prospective students: individualized, faculty-taught field education for master's students, nationally renowned faculty with a strong interdisciplinary focus, and hands-on research training in a highly individualized program of study for doctoral students.

The school offers unique opportunities for students to receive state-of-the-art professional training through its field education program. Student practice opportunities range from experiences in institutional and community-based settings to working with families and other significant caregivers, with individuals and groups, and in policy and service delivery issues.

Mission: The mission of the School of Social Work is to enhance human well-being and promote social and economic justice for people who are disadvantaged to achieve an equitable, healthy, and productive society. The school aims to:

- Create, advance, strengthen, and integrate interdisciplinary knowledge for students and the profession through research, scholarship, and practice.
- Educate students to become highly skilled, culturally competent, and ethical practitioners who will provide leadership for the profession of social work within the state of Wisconsin and nationally.
- Promote change at levels ranging from the individual client to national, including empowering communities and populations that are disadvantaged and developing humane service delivery systems.

- Create and disseminate knowledge regarding the prevention and amelioration of social problems.

The School of Social Work is one of five professional schools in the College of Letters & Science. As part of the college, the school maintains relationships with the other social studies and professional schools within the university system through interchange of faculty and students and through joint research and publication endeavors.

ADMISSIONS

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Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).** Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 1
Spring Deadline	The program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	The program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required but may be considered if available
English Proficiency	Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the PhD program admission requirements: https://socwork.wisc.edu/admissions/phd-application (https://socwork.wisc.edu/admissions/phd-application/)
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

School of Social Work PhD Admissions Committee requires:

- An undergraduate grade-point average of at least 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) on the equivalent of the last 60 semester hours.
- A completed statistics course and 30 semester credits of social science courses.
- Evidence of research interest and potential for scholarship in a relevant social problem area. This is demonstrated in a carefully thought-out Statement of Reasons for Graduate Study, and other application materials. See the PhD Application (<https://socwork.wisc.edu/admissions/phd-application/>) page for details.

Applicants must complete an online application (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>).

FUNDING

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GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/>) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Social Welfare PhD students receive a robust and competitive funding package. More details are available on our Financial Support page. Social Welfare PhD students are generally guaranteed* a minimum funding package consisting of a 33.4%, nine-month appointment for five years**.

Graduate assistantships appointed at 33.3% or higher (>13 hours/week) provide multiple benefits:

- monthly stipend;
- remission* of both resident and non-resident tuition (students will still need to pay segregated fees, roughly \$726/semester); and
- eligibility for health insurance (health insurance options* for a reasonable premium* are among the country's best group health insurance plans).

Support funding is available for current PhD students seeking conference, dissertation research activities (e.g., data collection costs, participant incentives, transcription), or emergency funding.

Additionally, incoming and current students are considered for PhD Scholarships and Awards.

*For students in good academic standing, making satisfactory progress in their coursework, performing acceptably in their appointed position, and remaining in residence.

**Many appointments or combinations of appointments go above the minimum guarantee of 33.4%, and may include summer appointments. However, the guarantee of funding is 33.4% for nine months for five years.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirements>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail	
Minimum Credit Requirement	51 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	32 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	43 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. This program follows the Graduate School's policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/).
Other Grade Requirements	Students must pass all courses with a grade of B or better. A student must retake any required course in which a lower grade than B is received, except for the statistics sequence where a grade of BC or C may be offset by a grade of A or AB in another statistics course.
Assessments and Examinations	Doctoral students are required to complete a comprehensive preliminary/oral examination after they have cleared their record of all Incomplete and Progress grades (other than research and thesis). Deposit of the doctoral dissertation in the Graduate School is required.
Language Requirements	n/a
Graduate School Breadth Requirement	Students are not required to complete a doctoral minor or graduate/professional certificate.

REQUIRED COURSES

The first two years of the curriculum emphasize methodological, statistical, theoretical and substantive coursework. A variety of social welfare seminars are offered within the school. Students from several departments are invited to join these seminars creating a rich interdisciplinary training environment.

Two foundation social welfare research methods seminars cover the fundamentals of research design and implementation relevant to the design and conduct of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research. Research methods seminars provide practical experience and application of research knowledge and skills (e.g., proposal writing and data analysis).

The social policy and applied theory seminars address specific substantive issues (e.g., poverty, child welfare, family policy), as well as core policy analytics and models of the application of social theory to social problems, respectively. The social welfare faculty research seminar (SOC WORK 946 Faculty Research Seminar, fall semester); and two student research seminars (SOC WORK 947 Student Research Seminar, spring semesters) provide opportunity for professional socialization to the field and development of research interests.

The curriculum is designed to require students to take courses in other departments based on their individualized learning needs. Students take substantive and research courses focusing on topics related to their specialization.

Students select an approved social science theory course; two statistics courses; two substantive elective courses; and two statistics/methodology elective courses.

The minimum total credit requirement is 51 and students typically take at least 9 credits in the form of SOC WORK 999 Independent Reading and SOC WORK 990 Thesis–Research under the supervision of their major professor while working on their preliminary exam and their dissertation.

Standard PhD Coursework

Code	Title	Credits
SOC WORK 675	Topics in Contemporary Social Welfare ¹	2
SOC WORK 708	The Field of Social Work ¹	2
SOC WORK 711	Human Behavior and the Environment ¹	2
SOC WORK 946	Faculty Research Seminar	1
SOC WORK 947	Student Research Seminar (taken twice for 2 credits)	2
SOC WORK 948	Proseminar	3
SOC WORK 949	Proseminar	3
SOC WORK 950	PhD Proseminar ²	3
SOC WORK 950	PhD Proseminar ³	3
	or SOC WORK 951 PhD Proseminar	
SOC WORK 951	PhD Proseminar ²	3
SOC WORK 952	PhD Proseminar ⁴	3
	or SOC WORK/ED PSYCH 945 Evaluation Research	
Total Credits		27

¹ SOC WORK 675, SOC WORK 708, and SOC WORK 711 is a selection of coursework that indicates competence in the practice of social work.

Students entering with a BSW and/or MSW degree earned within the last ten years have demonstrated these competencies, regardless of the specific coursework previously completed, resulting in 6 transfer credits, and an exemption of SOC WORK 675, SOC WORK 708, and SOC WORK 711

² SOC WORK 950 and SOC WORK 951 must each be taken once (1).

³ SOC WORK 950 OR SOC WORK 951 must be taken a second time (2)

⁴ SOC WORK 952 OR SOC WORK/ED PSYCH 945 must be taken once (1). SOC WORK 952 AND SOC WORK/ED PSYCH 945 can both be taken once, in which case, either SOC WORK 952 or SOC WORK/ED PSYCH 945 can count as a statistics/methods course requirement. SOC WORK 952 may be taken twice, in which case it can meet a statistics/methods course requirement.

Required PhD Elective Sequence

Code	Title	Credits
Social Science Theory Elective (1) ^{1,2}		3
Substantive Elective (1) ^{2,3}		3
Statistics 2		3-4
Statistics 3		3-4
Substantive Elective (2) ^{2,3}		3
Stats/Methods Elective (1) ²		3
Stats/Methods Elective (2) ²		3
Total Credits		21-23

¹ Social science theory must NOT be a Social Work (SOC WORK (http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/soc_work/)) course but a class taken outside of the Sandra Rosenbaum School of Social Work (SRSSW).

² With PhD Program Chair approval, students may register for an independent reading course (SOC WORK 999) with faculty to fulfill the social science theory (must be a faculty member outside of SRSSW) or a substantive or statistics/methods elective requirement for a maximum of 6 credits. This requires developing a proposed learning plan, identifying a faculty member with expertise in the area of interest, and requesting supervision. All plans must be approved by the PhD Program Chair before enrolling.

³ At least 1 of the 2 substantive elective courses must NOT be a Social Work (SOC WORK (http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/soc_work/)) course but a class taken outside of the Sandra Rosenbaum School of Social Work (SRSSW).

Required PhD Research

Code	Title	Credits
SOC WORK 990	Thesis-Research ¹	3
Total Credits		3

¹ Dissertators must enroll during the semester or general 8-week summer session (DHH) in which they expect to earn a degree. Students must be enrolled during the semester when they defend the dissertation and when they deposit the dissertation. For details, see <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208> (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208/>).

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned from Other Institutions

Students may transfer up to 6 credits of social work coursework from a Masters of Social Work (MSW) program.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

Students may transfer up to 6 credits of social work coursework from a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program.

Credits Earned as Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Credits earned as a professional student at UW-Madison are not allowed to transfer.

Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

Students may transfer 6 credits of social work coursework earned as a University Special student.

PROBATION

Refer to the Graduate School: Probation (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/>) policy.

ADVISOR/COMMITTEE

Refer to the Graduate School: Advisor (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232/>) and Graduate School: Committees (Doctoral/Master's/MFA) (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201/>) policies.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME LIMITS

Coursework earned more than 10 years prior to admission to the PhD program may not be used to satisfy degree credit minimums.

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)

- Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Dean of Students Office (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employee disabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

Students should contact the department chair or program director with questions about grievances. They may also contact the L&S Academic Divisional Associate Deans, the L&S Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning Administration, or the L&S Director of Human Resources.

OTHER

n/a

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Demonstrate understanding of social welfare problems, theories, policies, and programs.
2. Conceptualize and analyze approaches to improving social welfare problems, theories, policies, and programs.
3. Apply advanced quantitative and/or qualitative methodology for social welfare scholarship.
4. Develop knowledge and skills to teach and/or present social welfare-related material in professional contexts .
5. Demonstrate professional and ethical conduct.
6. Create research, scholarship, or programing that enhances social welfare.

PEOPLE

PEOPLE

Professors: Lawrence M. Berger, MSW, PhD; Marah H. Curtis, MSW, PhD; Katherine Magnuson, PhD; Stephanie A. Robert, MSW, PhD (School director)

Associate Professors: Lauren Bishop, MSW, PhD; Tally Moses, MSW, PhD; Tova Walsh, MSW, PhD; Marci Ybarra, MSW, PhD

Assistant Professors: Pajarita Charles, MPA, MSW, PhD; Lara Gerassi, MSW, PhD; LB Klein, MSW, PhD; Jooyoung Kong, MSW, PhD; Jessica Pac, MPA, PhD; Alejandra Ros Pilarz, MA, PhD; Tawandra Rowell-Cunsolo, MA, PhD; Weidi Qin, MSW, PhD

Faculty Affiliates: Judi Bartfeld, BS, PhD; J. Michael Collins, MPP; John Eason, MPP, PhD; David J. Pate, Jr., PhD; Quentin Riser, PhD

A complete list of all faculty and staff in the school is available on the School of Social Work Directory (<https://socwork.wisc.edu/directory/>).